

111.2 The Return of the Troops after the Western Campaign; the Restoration of the Securing of the Eastern Border by the Deployment of the 18th Army; the Role of the "Panzer Group Guderian" Here we will answer the question whether the decentralization of the troops involved in the Western Campaign was a return of the divisions to restore the securing of the eastern border or already the beginning of the deployment against the Soviet Union, as the established historiography claims. Established historians like to claim that the deployment of the Wehrmacht in the East was carried out immediately after the victory in the West and for no apparent reason, following a premeditated plan, as it were, with the alleged aim of Hitler to finally fight for living space in the East. Gerd R. Ueberschär writes: "Without an overall view of both centers of power, one would otherwise overlook the deployment that had already begun in July 1940 as a result of Hitler's early decision to go to war. "35 Was this the time when the Wehrmacht began to deploy in the east for an attack on the Soviet Union, or was it only to carry out long overdue measures to secure the eastern border? Let us look again at the chronological sequence of events in the East, which have already been explained several times, and consider their connection to the subsequent actions of the Wehrmacht. May/June 1940 Exposure of the eastern border during the Western campaign. The eastern border was secured by 7 Landwehr divisions. 15-17 June Expansion of the Baltic States by the Red Army and their military occupation in 1940. 22 June 1940 Armistice negotiations in the West at Compiegue. 25 June 1940 End of the French campaign. Order of the OKW on cease-fire as of 01:35. 26 June 1940 After the end of the French campaign, issuance of the order to decentralize the Wehrmacht (document IH.15). Remaining of 67 divisions in the West. Transfer of 15 divisions to the east. 28 June 1940 Red Army occupation of Bessarabia and northern Bukovina. 29 June 1940 Instruction of OB des Heeres to AOK 18 to secure German eastern border against Russia and Lithuania (Document IIL27). 06 July 1940 Issuance by Tymoshenko of directives for the deployment of 102 Red Army divisions to the border military districts of the Soviet Union. 09 July 1940 Notification by AOK 18 of the planned deployment of forces of the 18th Army (Document IIL28). 22 July 1940 Deployment order issued by AOK 18 to subordinate units and deployment of 15 infantry divisions to the east (Document IIL29). 37 On 09 June 1940, only 7 divisions of the Wehrmacht not capable of front-line service, including 6 Landesschützendivisionen and 1 infantry division, were still stationed in the area of Oberkommando Ost (High Command East). The Landesschützendivisionen, Ersatztruppenteile, Jägerbataillone were only suitable for occupation and guard duties, hardly motorized and without heavy weapons. These Landesschützen units detached from Denmark, Holland, the Protectorate, and the East were not put to any new use (such as in preparation for Barbarossa, a problem not yet apparent at that time), but were transferred to home bases and placed under the command of the Ersatzheer (Chief H.Rü. u. B.d.E.) with a view to demobilization. A total of 39 divisions of the Army were to be demobilized. In order to eliminate Germany's defensive weakness in the east and in view of the advance of Red Army troops, GO Halder recorded in the war diary on 16 June 1940 that 15 divisions were to be earmarked for the east: "Building up coastal defenses with mobile reserves (meaning the west of the Verf). For the east, 15 divisions; Norway, in addition to the seven, five more and two to three armored divisions (to facilitate negotiations with Sweden on Narvik railroad and road); Denmark, 1. Of the 120 (including fast) to be formed by merging 160 divisions, this leaves about 85 in France, including 65 Inf.Div. In addition to the 120 Divn.immediately ready for another 45, prepare material on military training grounds and ensure rapid deployment of the 45 Divn. " 38 In a meeting of the OB of the Army with Halder on 18 June 1940, the outlines of the Army reduction to 120 divisions and for decentralization of the Army with the end of the French campaign were laid down. In a note to the War Diary, the editor recorded the purpose of replacing divisions in the east: "Since the Landesschützen Div. were to be disbanded, including those that were in the east, new divisions had to be transferred to the Generalgouvernement. Any offensive intentions, however, were

not yet connected with this. "39 This can by no means be contradicted. On June 18, 1940, Halder also discussed with Gehlen the future land fortifications in the east. In the war diary, he recorded about it: quote IIL21 "Principle: Minimum! What you have, you should spend on the attack. Defense: a) By an anti-tank line (along rivers). b) By an organization of the fastest deployment of forces. c) By the best network of roads and railroads for bringing in these forces. d) Prepared groups at particularly important points to channel enemy incursions operationally (not tactically!). e) Widest use of mines as ordnance. "

40 This entry confirms that Halder was following developments in the east very closely, especially the eastward expansion in the Baltic states from 15 to 17 June 1940 and thus the immediate confrontation with the Red Army on the East Prussian border, and that he had drawn his conclusions from this with regard to ensuring security in the east. It is clear that with these considerations he made the necessary transition from the previous selective border protection exercised by the Landesschützendivisionen to be withdrawn to the defense of the border of East Prussia with Lithuania and the eastern border of the Generalgouvernement and envisaged, in the event of an attack by the Red Army, to conduct a stalling defense and to respond with counterattacks by troops that were to be brought in quickly. Halder's thoughts expressed to Gehlen in quotation III. 21 demonstrate the basic intention of defensive actions in the East and confirm that the development of the infrastructure in the East was already envisaged in June 1940 under precisely this concern, as it was later laid down in the directive "Aufbau Ost" (Document 111.6\$). The situation report of 24 June 1940 41 made to Halder on developments in the Baltic States and the information received from Oberquartiermeister IV on 25 June 1940 42 concerning the extension of the Soviet Union's planned expansion of Bessarabia to include northern Bukovina evidently formed the basis of his consideration, expressed in his briefing on 25 June 1940, of creating more striking power in the east. Halder recorded this in the war diary on June 25, 1940: "v. Greiffenberg, Buhle, Röhricht, Weinknecht: The organization and reorganization orders are discussed. New point of view: striking power in the east. (15 inf, 6 pz, 3 mot.). "43 Although political Berlin noted this development with uneasiness but still without concern,44 Halder undoubtedly believed that he had to fulfill his responsibility as Chief of the General Staff for national defense by considering also deploying armored divisions in the east (which, however, had not yet been done, since these divisions had merely been transferred back to their home bases). There is undoubtedly a connection with the reports made to Halder on June 24 and 25, 1940, concerning the development of the situation in the east. It takes a great deal of imagination to interpret the regrouping of the army and the transfer of 15 divisions to the east of Germany, which was initiated after the end of the French campaign by order of the Army High Command of June 26, 1940, as the beginning of the buildup for an offensive against the Soviet Union. This order states, "The Army is regrouping, refreshing its formations, and making organizational changes. "(Document III.22). According to this order, considerable parts of the troops involved in the Western Campaign in the strength of three Army Groups (HGr. A (6th, 9th, and 16th Armies), HGr. B (4th and 7th Armies), and HGr. C (1st, 2nd, and 12th Armies)), a total of 67 divisions, remained outside the borders of Germany in the occupied countries in the west with the task of securing the sea coast from the Dutch to the Spanish border and of guarding the occupied territory. Some of the combat-experienced units were further decentralized to Denmark (269th ID), to Holland (197th ID), to the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia (163rd ID), and to the homeland, including the east (15 infantry divisions), replacing the Land Rifle units deployed there during the French campaign, which were slated for disbandment. According to the order, there was no need yet to transfer divisions to Scandinavia or the Balkans. The order also specified the whereabouts of the Army troops and their subordination to the Army High Command. That is, the 15 infantry divisions moved to the eastern border without Army troops, which corresponded to a serious weakening of the combat strength of these divisions. The deployment of the army troops was to be ordered separately. As an order of

regrouping, the above-mentioned order stipulated that, in order to ensure security in the occupied countries (Denmark, Holland, and the East), the arrival of the formations should be carried out first and only then the detached divisions should be removed. This temporary accumulation of units during the handover process was apparently due to the misjudgment of an excessive concentration of units in the east. Because of the tense situation in the east, the commander of the Reserve Army, General Fromm, expressed his reluctance to disband these eastern formations (meaning the Landwehr divisions) in a meeting with Halder on July 1, 1940, concerning the questions of "demobilization" and disbandment of the eastern divisions.⁴⁵ That Halder was regularly informed by the Chief of the Foreign Armies East, Kinzel, about the growing concentration of Russian troops in the western military districts of the Soviet Union is also proven by his entry in the war diary on July 4, 1940: "Küchler-Marcks: briefing on the tasks of AOK 18 concerning eastern tactical command, fortification, administration; Kinzel lectures on troop distribution in Russia. " ⁴⁶ When Halder, in enforcement of the order of 26 June 1940, on 4 July 1940 misleadingly formulated "b) Transport drafts: tank movements from 18.7. to the east. " he meant the transfer of a number of armored divisions to their home bases, because there were no transfers of armored divisions to East Prussia and the Generalgouvernement in July and August 1940, but the return of armored divisions, as far as they did not remain in France, for refreshment and reorganization to their home bases (e.g.: to Vienna/St. Pölten and Berlin/Brandenburg). Of course, this was a "tank movement ..." from the wartime base in France. These divisions remained under the command of the commander-in-chief of the army. The first transfer of a panzer division (1st PD) to East Prussia in the Zinten-Allenstein-Rastenburg area to ensure greater security was made at Hitler's personal request on 05 September 1940 (start of transport). ⁴⁷ These logical and deeply logical connections are negated by the established historiography. Such formulations of Halder ("What one has, one should spend for the attack", "striking power in the east" or "tank movements from 18.7. to the east") in connection with an allegedly immediately beginning deployment against the Soviet Union are pure constructions of the established historiography. In order to avoid any suspicion of provocation on the Russian side, the German military attaché, General Köstring, informed Halder in Moscow as a confidence-building measure, as can be seen from the following message from Oberquartiermeister IV to Halder of July 18, 1940, about the completion of this order. An editor's note stated: "Note (1): The German military attaché in Moscow, GL Köstring, had been instructed to make a statement to the Soviet Government concerning German measures in the East (in recent weeks) (transfer of divisions, improvement of the railroad unloading network). " ⁴⁹ The instruction for the security buildup in the east was issued by the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, Field Marshal von Brauchitsch, on June 29, 1940, under the title "Anweisung für das A. O.K. 18. " (Cf. the following documents III.27 to III.29.). From these tasks given to the commander-in-chief of the 18th Army to organize tactical command, lay out fortifications, and ensure administration, one can clearly infer the defensive objective of the 18th Army's deployment to ensure security in the east. To ensure secure command of the formations in the east, AOK 18 (Document 111.27) was established and the previous command authority Oberost was assigned the tasks of territorial expansion. Probably on 25 June 1940, the staff of AOK 18 was put on the march to the east and on 01 July 1940 was listed in the field army's outline as standing in the east. AOK 18, transferred to East Prussia, Bromberg location, assumed command in the east on 04 July 1940 ⁵², while the exchange of divisions in the east was considered complete on 20 July 1940. Thus, on 21 July 1940, 15 infantry divisions, but no armored and no motorized infantry divisions of the Wehrmacht were in East Prussia and the Generalgouvernement.⁵³ The tasks of the 18th Army (A.O.K. 18) were ordered as follows: "A.O.K. 18 secures the German eastern border with respect to Russia and Lithuania in accordance with special instructions. In addition, A. O.K. 18 supervises the training of subordinate units. " (Document 111²⁷) Consequently, the

Commander-in-Chief of the Army now specified in the instruction of 29 June 1940 for AOK 18:
 Quote IIL24 "A. O.K. 18 is responsible for securing the German eastern border against Russia and Lithuania. For this purpose, A.O.K. makes all preparations a) to bring an advance of enemy forces on the Vistula line and on the eastern border of East Prussia to a halt in such a way that after the supply of forces an attack can be launched, b) ...a 54 For the fulfillment of these tasks, six General Commands (AK), two higher commands, and 15 infantry divisions were subordinated to the Army High Command. Since it must have been clear to Halder that these 15 infantry divisions could not withstand the attack of the large number of Red Army divisions concentrated in the border military districts of the Soviet Union, he provided for the addition of 4 armored and 2 motorized infantry divisions in the event of defense to carry out counterattacks, but these were not subordinate to Army High Command 18. Nevertheless, the established historiography tries to interpret the actions of the Wehrmacht in carrying out the orders for the 18th Army as an incipient deployment of the Wehrmacht by depicting the "Guderian Group" with these 4 tank and 2 motorized infantry divisions as deployed against the Soviet Union. Falsely, one simply depicted the war structure of the 18th Army, which, however, was to be captured only in the event of an attack by the Red Army. Thus, in a review of the first part of the author's study on "Germany in Stalin's Sight" in the FAZ of 29.11.2016, the historian Rolf-Dieter Müller judged: "Schwipper fades out the fact that after the victory in the West, the Wehrmacht began the deployment by the "Guderian Group" and the 18th Army already in August 1940." This is a distortion of historical truth. Müller fades out: Only the staff of the "Guderian Group" was subordinated to the 18th Army (Document III.27, Instruction of the OKH for the 18th Army of 29. June 1940), while all of the above-mentioned 6 divisions remained under the command of the Army High Command, were transferred back to their home bases around Berlin/Vienna/Stettin/Oppeln for refreshment and reorganization after the French campaign (Document IIL22) 55, did not conduct any sortie against the Soviet Union in the summer of 1940, and were subordinated to the command of "Gruppe Guderian" only in the event of an attack by the Red Army and were prepared for counterattacks, according to the planning of the commander-in-chief of the 18th Army for a preventive strike. Army for a preventive strike, were to be used. So a completely normal planning serving the national defense. Obviously, he also does not know the statement of the book published in his institute, which says: "Guderian, p. 113, passes over this critical period essentially with silence. It should be remembered, however, that the "Guderian Group" at that time was a corps staff without subordinate troops and the whole thing was probably regarded as a "war game" in the context of training." 56 The decision report of the commander-in-chief of the 18th Army, General von Küchler, on the planned deployment of forces of 09 July 1940 (Document 111^28) proves the intention to use the forces on the upper San and in East Prussia for defense as well as to make the mass of his forces available in the eastern part of the Generalgouvernement in such a way that Russian attack preparations could already be smashed beyond the border of the area of interest by an own attack. The following difference is noteworthy here: while the Commander-in-Chief of the Army had still ordered in the instruction of June 29, 1940, "...an advance of enemy forces to bring to a standstill, that after supply of forces to the attack can be started." that is, purely defensive actions with a subsequent counterattack, the OB of the 18th Army in his decision of 09 July 1940 already reported the intention to create such a grouping "... that Russian attack preparations beyond the border of the area of interest can be smashed by own attack." Exactly this idea corresponds to the deployment instruction of the OB of the 18th Army of 22 July 1940 (document IIL29) to the subordinate corps. Thus, the commander-in-chief instructed: " 1.) In the event of a conflict with Russia, stronger German forces will be deployed in the east. Until their arrival, A. O.K. 18 will secure the German eastern border. 2.) For this purpose, the following battle management is intended: Defense on the upper San and in East Prussia, provision of the mass of forces

in the eastern part of the Generalgouvernement in such a way that Russian attack preparations beyond the border of the area of interest can be smashed by their own attack. "57 Thus the commander-in-chief of the 18th Army, contrary to the orders of the commander-in-chief of the Army, had decided on a pre-emptive strike on Russian attack preparations, i.e. to launch a pre-emptive strike against the Red Army already at this early date (09 July 1940) if necessary. And it was undoubtedly Halder who had confirmed this decision. After these tasks given to the rifle corps

of the 18th Army, an asymmetric warfare was planned, to be ready for defense on the upper San and in East Prussia, and to provide for a preventive strike in case Russian attack preparations were detected. To this end, the wartime structure of the 18th Army was to be captured and the redeployment of the 6 armored and motorized infantry divisions under the "Cu derian Armored Group" was to be carried out. By bringing these 4 armored and 2 motorized infantry divisions from their home bases, the concentration of forces required in the event of a Red Army attack was to be created within 72 hours of being called up. That the 18th Army itself did not understand this task as a deployment for an attack can be seen from the following formulation in the instruction of 22 July 1940: Quote IIL26 " 6.) The deployment of corps and divisions for the attack will be ordered

only during the period of tension depending on the situation. " 58 Naturally, the question arises as to what happened between 29 June and 09 July 1940 that caused the transition from counterattack to the planning of an anticipatory strike by the 18th Army. Without any doubt, the Red Army's campaign against Bessarabia and the occupation of northern Bukovina, among others, contributed to this decision. Apparently, it is also often overlooked that when Halder briefed the commander-in-chief and the chief of staff of the 18th Army on July 4, 1940, Kinzel also informed him about the worrying concentration of strong forces of the Red Army. The established historiography, which of course also recognized this fact, negates this intention of conducting a preemptive strike and speaks of an undeniable offensive character of these plans.⁵⁹ Summary of the Decentralization of the Wehrmacht with the End of the French Campaign and the Transfer of the 18th Army to the East in the Summer of 1940 1.

Reconstruction of an Eastern Security after the Western Campaign of the Wehrmacht There was no deployment with an offensive intention against the Soviet Union in the summer of 1940 According to the contents of the order of the Army High Command of 26. June 1940 and the follow-up documents for the transfer and planned deployment of the 18th Army, such an assumption that the Wehrmacht's deployment in the east for an attack on the Soviet Union had begun in the summer of 1940 cannot be inferred. The main content of the order of June 26, 1940, is the securing of the occupied territories in the west, the decentralization of part of the formations involved in the campaign against France, an extensive reduction of Wehrmacht divisions, especially by demobilizing the Landesschützenverbände that were no longer needed (or so it was believed), the refreshment and reorganization of the formations that continued to exist, and the elimination of the defensive weakness in the east. In order to eliminate this pronounced defensive weakness of the Wehrmacht in the east and to meet the justified security interests of the German Reich in the eastern direction, the Landesschützen units stationed there up to that time were replaced and Wehrmacht divisions were stationed there which, although considered combat-experienced after participating in the French campaign, were themselves in need of refreshment and restoration of their combat capability. No divisions were transferred to the east beyond what was necessary to ensure security in the east. Only infantry divisions were transferred to the east, not tanks or motorized divisions (instruction of the OKH, document IIL27). The order and further instructions did not specify a concentration of units against the Soviet Union, but rather an extensive decentralization of forces, i.e., a purely defensive deployment of this grouping of the 18th Army as well as the readiness to attack preemptively in the event of an imminent attack by the Red Army after the supply of reinforcements. Since quite a number of the divisions transferred to eastern Germany returned to their

home bases, it is nonsensical to speak of a Wehrmacht deployment in the east begun in the summer of 1940 in preparation for Barbarossa. Both the task given to AOK 18 and its structure and composition attest to the defensive mission of the 18th Army. A connection with the march of the Wehrmacht begun in February 1941 on the basis of Instruction No. 21 Case Barbarossa is untruthful and maliciously contrived. In Keitel's interrogation of 17 June 1945 (Document VI. 10), after his capture, he explains this situation as follows: Quote III.30 "The concentration of the German army in the spaces adjacent to areas of state interests of the USSR began by us immediately after the end of the French campaign, since at that time in the eastern spaces of us were only 5-7 divisions. " 63 2. The reconnaissance of a thoroughly dangerous developing situation in the East On the other hand, it is overlooked that there were sufficient indications, the actions of the Soviet Union (expansions of the Baltic states as well as Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, the on 06. July 1940, the increase of the air threat by the air forces of the Red Army, activities of the Soviet Union in Finland and in the Balkans, etc.), which on the whole testified to a change in the German-Russian relationship. The memo of conversation reported to Halder on July 24, 1940, by the Fremden Heere Ost (Document III.43) proves with a high degree of clarity that in mid-July 1940 the Army General Staff had relatively precise information about the concentration of 116 Red Army units in the border military districts, even though only vague conjectures (cf. Lossberg Study, Document III.83.) were available about the planned Red Army campaign in East Prussia 64 (The operational plan of 19 August 1940, however, was not confirmed by Stalin.). The author spares himself further explanations here, since the status of reconnaissance in the eastern direction is explained in detail in Chapter III. Ernst Klink confirmed this deployment of the Red Army as follows: "Despite the approach and massing (of the Red Army of the author), the General Staff of the Army did not assume that the Russian leadership was thinking of an offensive use of these troops against Germany, however, this assembly made possible "at any time or in case of change of the political situation" an offensive action to the southwest or west. Halder's precautions were thus quite justified, and it can be justified to assume that in giving the 18th Army deployment instructions he was going to the limit of what he could set in motion without Hitler's order, and that he wanted to make provision for the eventuality which he saw as unprovably approaching the German Wehrmacht. " 65 And in view of the possibility of such offensive action by the Red Army, it was necessary to provide for safeguard measures, albeit at a low level. Since Halder was aware of Hitler's conviction that the Soviet Union would abide by the nonaggression pact only so long as it gave it advantages, and since the Army High Command, especially Halder, had no illusions about Stalin's broad power-political objectives, the stipulations made in the instructions to the 18th Army and the decision of the commander in chief of the 18th Army to conduct a preemptive strike become understandable. Thus, even at this early date in the summer of 1940 (on 09 July 1940), there was an expectation on the part of the military that the conduct of a preventive strike by the Wehrmacht in the east might become necessary. 3. The falsification of the course of events by the established historiography The established historiography must accept not only the accusation of a false presentation of history, but also that of a malicious deception, because facts, figures and data, which in a number of historical works, such as in volume 4 of the work "The German Reich and the Second World War", refute with high unambiguity the allegations of a long-term deployment of the Wehrmacht, which had already begun in the summer of 1940, for an insidious invasion of an unsuspecting Soviet Union with the aim of acquiring living space in the East. The falsifying portrayal of the "Guderian Group" as a large unit already deployed against the Soviet Union in the summer of 1940 as well as the decision of the OB of the 18th Army to lead a preemptive strike in case of Russian attack preparations, which was definitely adapted to the worsening military-political situation, has already been reported above. The description of the deployment of the Red Army and the Wehrmacht on July 22, 1940 in the history book "Das Deutsche Reich und der

Zweite Weltkrieg" Vol. 4 in the following sketch III. 31 is also noteworthy. On the one hand, the concentration of 130 divisions of the Red Army in the western military districts of the Soviet Union, dated July 22, 1940, with a considerable massing in the Baltic States (46 divisions including the troops of the former Baltic States) and in Bukovina and Bessarabia (44 divisions), as shown in the above sketch II 1.31, should be able to convince every reader of the deployment of the Red Army. Especially since from the German side this enormous superiority was opposed only by the 15 infantry divisions of the 18th Army and at this time possibly by the remains of the 7 Landwehr divisions that had not yet been withdrawn and were to be demobilized.

which were to be demobilized. Regrettably, these findings in the sketch IIL31 are not translated into correct conclusions in the historiography but are presented in a falsified way. On the other hand, a comparison of this sketch, prepared for the historical work, with the note of conversation of July 24, 1940 (Document III.43), handed over to Halder by the Fremden Heere Ost, shows even an approximate correspondence, but thus proves an attempt to defuse the situation, which developed drastically in the summer of 1940, for the present-day account. Thus, in the areas around Bialystok and around Lviv, respectively, only 6 rifle and 6 cavalry divisions without armored brigades were depicted, whereas according to the above-mentioned discussion note of the Foreign Armies East, 45 divisions, i.e., about twice the number of divisions, were found in these areas. In reality, therefore, the Red Army's buildup directed against Germany had already reached threatening proportions, although this is something that people today refuse to acknowledge. Obviously, the tragedy of the established historiography consists in the fact that, on the one hand, the undeniable concentration of the Red Army in the western border military districts must be acknowledged, but, on the other hand, the reactions of the Wehrmacht to ensure security in the East and the implementation of preventive measures by the 18th Army,

forced by possible preparations for attack by the Red Army, are to be defamed as preparations for a racial ideological war of extermination and for the acquisition of living space in the East. This is how history is being written today. 111.3 The Military-Political Situation in the East; the Continuation of the Red Army's Deployment; Germany's Defensive Weakness in the East The Russo-Finnish War, the so-called "Winter War," which began on November 30, 1939, was over on March 13, 1940 (cessation of hostilities). In April 1940, the growing strength of the Red Army was 160 rifle and mountain rifle divisions, including 100 divisions in reinforced inventory (replenished close to war to more than 12,000 soldiers) with a total strength of about 4 million soldiers. In July 1940, the number of rifle divisions in the reinforced inventory increased to 113 and the strength of the Red Army in August 1940 to 4.2 million soldiers. From June 15 to 17, 1940, the Red Army carried out what it described as its campaign against the Baltic states and, on June 28, 1940, against Bessarabia and northern Bukovina. The Red Army's deployment, which began immediately in early July 1940, proves that these territorial expansions served primarily to expand the strategic deployment area. According to the documents of the General Staff of the Red Army, the beginning of the deployment was confirmed by Stalin on 04 July 1940 and the necessary directives were issued by the People's Commissar for Defense on 06 July 1940. On this basis, the Red Army again concentrated 102 divisions, including 12 armored divisions, in the western border military districts of the USSR during July-August 1940. This already corresponds to a number of 4699 tanks stationed in the border military districts in the summer of 1940, plus 2 armored divisions stationed in the Moscow Military District. For the deployment of troops, the People's Commissar for Defense requested the provision of 120,000 wagons. The stationing of 95 air squadrons in the border military districts, 57 of them in the Leningrad, Baltic, and Western Special Military Districts against East Prussia, created a new quality of air threat. The forward deployment of Red Army bomber forces with a radius of action of about 1,500 km created a serious air threat even for the German capital, Berlin. Completion of the conducted deployment in accordance with the then unconfirmed

draft operational plan of 19 August 1940 was ordered by about the end of August 1940. The objective of the deployment was the conquest of East Prussia and thus the continuation of the series of local campaigns to perfect the future theater of war. A covered partial mobilization (called "large training exercises") in the summer/fall of 1940, combined with the conscription of 766,000 reservists, confirmed this intention. As is known, this East Prussian campaign of the Red Army was not carried out, because the Wehrmacht's Western campaign surprisingly ended very quickly for Stalin and the expected long-lasting binding of the Wehrmacht and its attrition in the West did not occur. During the French campaign of the Wehrmacht in the summer of 1940, the protection of the eastern border in East Prussia and in the Generalgouvernement was reduced to a strength of 7 divisions. These 7 divisions (in June 1940), consisting of Landwehr units, Jäger battalions, and Ersatztruppenteilen, not fully replenished in personnel, without heavy weapons, unable to maneuver due to lack of transport, without tank troops and without bomber forces, were hardly capable of providing even a selective defense of the border with the Soviet Union. The Red Army's buildup against the German Reich thus began at this time of greatest defensive weakness for the Wehrmacht in the east. The return of Wehrmacht units from the Western campaign to their former locations with the aim of refreshment, followed by the withdrawal of the Landwehr divisions, made it possible to increase security in East Prussia and the Generalgouvernement slightly with 15 divisions (as of 21 July 1940), although without armored divisions and without bomber forces. The increase in the number of divisions stationed in the east to 30 (as of 07 October 1940) occurred only by directive of 06 September 1940, apparently after recognition of the developing dangerous situation.

III.4 The Development of the Realization of a Threatening Danger from the East; Hitler's New Opinion Formation and His Statement of Intent

Neither the political will for offensive action/preventive strike against the Soviet Union nor the realization of a dangerous development in the East threatening the German Reich were the result of a possible long-term plan/step-by-step plan, as claimed by a large number of historians, but rather a year-long tough process of increasing danger with a gradual escalation. So let us look at the gradual emergence of knowledge about this threatening development, which largely deviates from the previous interpretation of the sources and their interpretation by the established historians, and try to separate lies from truth.

02 June 1940 The Statement Imputed to Hitler

General Warlimont, referring to Ansei in his memoirs, describes a statement made by Hitler to his immediate entourage in the spring of 1940. Thus, the late General von Sodenstern is said to have reported a conversation Hitler had with Field Marshal von Rundstedt on 02 June 1940, in which Hitler is reported to have said, "-now that England is presumably ready for peace, he (Hitler) would begin to settle the score with Bolshevism." 68

The complete inconsistency of such a statement with the documented course of historical events apparently does not bother the established historians who refer to it, although at that time the French campaign was by no means decided but was only entering its second phase, England was not ready for peace despite the withdrawal of the British Expeditionary Corps at Dunkirk (26. May 1940), England was not ready for peace, and Hitler himself proved even at a much later date (VgL below.) by the instruction to reduce the army that a further land war was not in prospect. Since this statement by Hitler is very controversial in historiography, even Klee claims that Field Marshal von Rundstedt never expressed himself in this direction, the author now asks how credible and conclusive are words that are not supported by anything and have been reproduced via several persons? Such explanations leave rather the impression of source references spasmodically gathered in search of evidence. Even Goebbels contradicts such a statement with the following entry recorded in his diary on June 25, 1940: "The Führer, however, would agree to a peace on the following basis: out of Europe, colonies and mandates back, compensation for what was stolen from us after the world war. This is already being negotiated in a roundabout way, e.g. via Sweden. ...Incidentally, he also wants a complete peace as soon as possible." June 30, 1940 Halder's conversation with von Weizsäcker

In this conversation between Halder and von Weizsäcker, the latter is said to have communicated the following alleged view of Hitler: Quote III.32 „a) We can maintain the successes of this campaign only with the forces with which they were won, i.e., by military force. b) For peace building, no tangible documents yet. c) Eyes strongly fixed on the East. d) England will probably need a demonstration of our military might before she gives in and leaves our backs free for the East. On the whole, satisfied with Russia's restraint.... " 69 It is by no means proven that this remark "eyes strongly fixed on the East" was used by Hitler. According to Halder's statements in the war diary, von Weizsäcker is said to have communicated this view of Hitler to him in a conversation. Even the editor of the war diary questions this alleged statement used by Hitler with the addition "v. Weizsäcker expresses his personal view".

questioned. Of course, also Halder could not have reproduced these statements exactly or invented them. Even this his "personal view" to "turn the eyes strongly to the East "should not be surprising, since he must have been informed without any doubt about the letter of his superior, von Ribbentrop, and von Göring of 02 April 1940 (document 11.36), in which the Finnish Marshal Mannerheim was informed about an Anglo-Russian plan of attack against Germany. Also, all the details of these actions carried out in the East by the Soviet Union and the Red Army against Finland (November 30/1939 to March 13, 1940), the Baltic States (June 15-17, 1940), and Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina (June 28, 1940) by no means escaped the attention of the political and military leadership of the German Reich and should have aroused more than just astonishment and displeasure. However, should Hitler have used the above-mentioned statement to von Weizsäcker, this is not at all surprising in view of the chronological sequence of events in the East, especially also due to the occupation of Lithuania, which, according to the Additional Protocol of August 23, 1939, did not belong to the sphere of interest of the USSR and thus a direct line of confrontation with East Prussia was established, as well as due to the occupation of Northern Bukovina, which was inhabited by a majority of Germans. While the threat to Finnish Petsamo (nickel ore mines) and to iron ore shipments from Kiruna, Sweden, created by the Finnish campaign still met with Hitler's enforced acceptance, the advance of the Red Army into the Baltic countries and of the Baltic Red Banner Fleet into the eastern Baltic could now directly threaten Germany and, through the Red Army's invasion as far as the Pruth River, also endanger oil supplies from Ploesti, Romania. It is thus quite reasonable, especially in view of the still continuing concentration of

the main forces of the Wehrmacht in the west, the decentralization of which was only initiated by the order of 26 June 1940, to turn one's attention, or, as Halder put it, one's "eyes strongly on the east." It goes without saying that established historiography already interprets this formulation as an indication of Hitler's supposed intention to acquire living space in the East. 01 July 1940 Reception of Cripps by Stalin After initial contradictions and the arrival of a letter from Churchill to Stalin, the latter received the new British ambassador Cripps in Moscow. He is said to have been aware that Hitler would watch this meeting suspiciously. 70 03 July 1940 Routine Briefing by Halder at Army General Staff Under the impression of von Weizsäcker's memo concerning Hitler's above-mentioned alleged opinion that his "eyes were strongly fixed on the East," Halder explained his views concerning further operational questions at a briefing on 03 July 1940 and presented the following to Colonel von Greiffenberg: Quote III.33 "a) Operational questions. In the foreground at present is the question of England, which will be dealt with separately, and the question of the East. The latter must be considered from the main point of view of how to strike a military blow at Russia in order to force from her the recognition of Germany's dominant role in Europe. In addition, there are special points of view, such as the countries of the Baltic Sea or the Balkans. Variants cause. " 1 are. This strengthens the impression that Colonel General Halder initiated the first planning steps, which at this early stage could have been his initiative alone. Nevertheless, after the end of the war against France, it is normal for the Chief of the General Staff of

the Army to commission a study for the East, especially since this commission was preceded by the above-mentioned campaigns of the Red Army and the East was in no way prepared for military defense actions by the General Staff. 04 July 1940 Message from Kinzel to Halder In connection with the briefing of the commander-in-chief of the 18th Army, von K  chler, and his Chief of the General Staff on future tasks, Halder recorded in the war diary: "Kinzel lectures on troop distribution Russia. " A transcript of the contents of Kinzel's message to Halder is not available to the author. The last reconnaissance information known before 04 July 1940 was dated 12 September 1939 (Document 11.27). There had been no political will for serious reconnaissance of the Soviet Union since the conclusion of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of August 1939. That nevertheless, contrary to Hitler's ban on reconnaissance and the resulting intelligence gap, further information on the development of the Red Army and the concentration of formations in the new border military districts of the USSR was routinely collected is evidenced by Kinzel's memo of conversation for Halder of July 24, 1940 (Document IH.43). There was also, after all, a whole series of signs of developments unfriendly to Germany in the East that must have aroused the attention of German reconnaissance. Let us take Goebbels' diary entry of 05 July 1940 "Russians at the border are becoming increasingly impertinent. " and of 06 July 1940 "Otherwise the behavior of the Russians is anything but pleasant. " as proof that the political leadership of the German Reich was watching developments in the East very closely and not without a stimrunzeln. 72 July 13, 1940 Hitler's Meeting with Halder at the Berghof On July 13, 1940, Halder gave a lecture to Hitler on the possibilities of landing in England. Halder lectured on England's land forces and their distribution, his own approach, force sizing, structure, and their organization, as well as technical preparations, proposals, and demands on the other parts of the Wehrmacht, and the timing of the planned landing. In the agenda item of the "military consideration of the political situation", under the aspect of the calculation of forces for the planned landing in England, the proposal was made "... not to disband 20 of the 35 Divn. assigned for disbandment in the homeland, but only to return them to the homeland through leave of absence of the manpower, in order to have the Divn. immediately at hand again. " This suggestion, according to the War Diary, is said to have been made by the Army Commander-in-Chief, von Brauchitsch (Chapter III.9). '3 Hitler's subsequent political reflections dealt with Spain, which he wanted to bring into play in order to build up the enemy front against England, with Romania, which would like to place itself under Hitler's protection, with Hungary and Bulgaria, Italy and Africa. Of course, the Russian problem that was opening up also found mention, as stated in the following quotation III.34. Halder recorded in his minutes of the meeting with Hitler: Quote IIL34 Hitler's remarks: "2. Russia's interest in not letting us grow large is recognized. Striving of Russia for the Bosphorus inconvenient for Italy. "Halder's thoughts on Hitler's statements, recorded in the war diary: "The F  hrer is most concerned with the question of why England does not yet want to take the road to peace. Like us, he sees the solution of the question in the fact that England still has a hope in Russia. He therefore expects to have to force England to make peace. But he does not like to do such a thing. Reason: If we crush England militarily, the British Empire will disintegrate. But Germany would not benefit from this. We would achieve something with German blood, the beneficiaries of which would only be Japan, America and others. "74 In view of the spatial assignment of von Brauchitsch's proposal in the war diary not to dismiss 20 divisions but only to give them leave of absence, it is clear that this proposal to reduce the number of divisions to be demobilized has no connection whatsoever with a possible Russian campaign, as claimed by some established historians, but results from the Army High Command's calculation of forces for broadening the enemy front against England and, in particular, for carrying out the "Sea Lion" enterprise. Hitler's formulation, "2nd interest of Russia not to let us become large, ... " testifies to his well-founded suspicion of Russia (Cf. the actions of the Soviet Union known to him against Finland, the Baltic States, Bessarabia and northern Bukovina)

and to fears regarding Russia's future loyalty to Germany, but in no case to a will to attack the Soviet Union. July 14-17, 1940 Receipt of Information on Stalin's Conversation with Cripps The German ambassador in Moscow, v. d. Schulenburg, received from Molotov on July 13, 1940, a "doctored" written account of the British offer made by Cripps and sent this information to Berlin on July 14, 1940. According to a letter from Military Attaché Köstring to Herr von Toppelskirch, dated July 17, 1940, this communication from the British government to Stalin had the content shown in Quote III.35: Quote III.35 1. Germany intends to subjugate all the states of Europe. The hegemony of Germany is a danger not only to England but also to the S. U. England considers it necessary to oppose this hegemony and to restore the balance in Europe. (2) Apart from this political union, England wishes to enter into trade relations with the Soviet Union, on condition that the goods exported by England to the Soviet Union are not forwarded to Germany. 3 England is of the opinion

that the Balkan states should be united. In the present circumstances, only the S.U. would be able to do so. 4. England knows that the S.U. is dissatisfied with Turkey's regime at the Dardanelles and the Black Sea. England recognizes the S. U. interest in the straits. 75 Even though Molotov's "doctored" account of Stalin's reply to Cripps convinced Köstring that it disproved the numerous rumors of intended Soviet action and deployment against Germany, such an outreach by wartime adversary Britain to the Soviet Union was bound to further increase Hitler's extraordinary and justified distrust of Stalin's policies. It later became known that Stalin was said to have uttered, "...the Soviet Union regards Germany as the only real threat. A German victory over Britain would place the Soviet Union in a difficult, if not dangerous, position." 76 Lt. Warlimont is said to have suggested "a Russian change of front against Germany." 77 In the author's view, these statements should have corresponded to Stalin's true thinking, then to foresee the favorable possibility of further westward expansion of his empire while Germany was tied in the west and the Wehrmacht's formations were widely dispersed. After all, he had ordered the beginning of the Red Army's westward march on 04 July 1940. However, it must be doubtful that Stalin, as a sly interlocutor, should have revealed his thoughts at a first meeting with the British ambassador. Despite the hardly tangible results of this meeting after von der Schulenburg's and Köstring's communication, it must have worried Hitler very much, since a change of Stalin's position to the Western Allies had become quite conceivable, should the military-political situation be favorable for Stalin. Even bearing in mind the reports received in the run-up to the war from the German embassies in London and Paris as well as the documents found at La Charite on June 19, 1940, Hitler's fears expressed on July 21, 1940 to the supreme commanders of the Wehrmacht should not have come as a surprise. July 14-18, 1940 Receipt of information from the Yugoslav Ambassador in Moscow, Gavrilovich, from a secret source On July 26, 1940, the German Ambassador in Moscow received information from the Foreign Office about a report from Gavrilovich /8 to the Foreign Ministry, which the Foreign Office had received from a top-secret source. In this report Gavrilovich stated: 1. that the Soviet Union

wished to develop its relations with Yugoslavia, was endeavoring to influence Yugoslavia against Germany, and expected Yugoslavia to ally itself with it; 2. that in a conversation with Cripps, the latter had stressed his good relations with Molotov and underlined that England was willing to see the war through to the end; 3. that the Soviet Union was not willing to take part in the war against Germany, and that the Soviet Union was not willing to take part in it. In a conversation with the Turkish ambassador, the latter had praised the strength of the Red Army, which had about 180 divisions, the bulk of which were facing Germany and whose motorization was in constant progress; 4. The French ambassador had pointed out that the Soviets were making tremendous efforts to perfect their armaments. 79 At the same time, Hitler also received from a secret source dispatches to Athens from the Greek ambassador in Moscow. This information should have further increased Hitler's suspicion of the

Soviet Union and its intentions against Germany, indicating that the Soviet Union was secretly engaged in anti-German stirring and might be preparing for a military strike against Germany, contrary to its official pronouncements. In a conversation with the supreme commanders of the Wehrmacht units on July 31, 1940, Hitler confirmed this fact by stating: "Intercepted conversations. Russia unpleasantly touched by rapid development of West European situation. "so July 19, 1940 Hitler's speech to the Reichstag; the La Charite documents On June 19, 1940, a German soldier at the La Charite (France) train station discovered a document collection of secret files of the Allied Supreme War Council, including the minutes of all meetings of that council, which were immediately turned over to German intelligence. These documents, not refutable since they bear marginal notes by Gamelin, Daladier, Weygand, and others, provide detailed information about Allied war plans on the flanks of Germany. In his speech of July 19, 1940, before the Reichstag in Berlin, Hitler refers to these Allied war plans on the northern and southern flanks of Germany and set forth: The Assessment of the Lecture Note on "Russia" of 24 July 1940 and its Supplement of 01 August 1940 Consideration of this document is significant because it proves that the decisive information about the growth of a threatening situation in the East was already available in the Army High Command in July 1940 and must have formed one of the bases for Hitler's consultation with the Commanders-in-Chief of the Wehrmacht components on 31 July 1940. The strength of the Red Army in July 1940 was estimated as follows: quote IIL45 "Russia 1.) The forces July 1940. 20 armies 30 corps (at least), 151 rifle div. (including several mot.) 9 cav.corps, 32 cav.div. 6 mot.mech.corps, 30 mot.mech.brig. " 97 Thus, the total strength of the Red Army was established at 198 calculation divisions. (Calculation basis: 2 brigades = 1 division). Thus, in July 1940, information on an enormous increase in the total number of divisions since January 1939 (145-153 divisions at that time, see Document II.1 and Citation IL2) was already available in the Army High Command. Also noteworthy is the enlightened and by 24 July 1940 established high number of 151 rifle divisions, including several motorized divisions, in contrast to 100-108 rifle divisions in January 1939 in the peacetime state of the Red Army. In point 2.) the enlightened distribution of the Red Army forces on the territorial spaces, broken down by the number of rifle, motorized, cavalry and mot.mech. divisions or brigades, was mentioned. Since of 55 % of the divisions and brigades reconnoitered, the numbers of the units could also be assigned, this memo of conversation nevertheless shows a considerable degree of accuracy, even if not all division numbers were correctly recognized. Whereas as late as the beginning of 1939 only 55-58 divisions (Document II.1) were identified on the Russian western frontier, in the lecture note of 24 July 1940 (Document III.43) already noted the surprising concentration of 116 Red Army divisions in the border military districts of the USSR A comparison of the number of divisions in the spaces near the border established by the Foreign Armies East with the divisions actually marching in the border military districts at that time 1t. the Russian documents is shown in Table III.46. A comparison of the figures given in Table III.46 reveals an approximate correspondence between the numbers of the Foreign Armies East and the actual situation of the Red Army formations. (Whereby the reconfiguration of the western military districts must be taken into account.) 1. The deployment fiir a planned East Prussian campaign The reconnaissance information of July 24, 1940 (Document III.43) proves that the incipient concentration of considerable Red Army forces against East Prussia was recognized in the Army High Command. After evaluating the Russian documents, we now know for sure. The target was East Prussia! The concentration of 52 divisions of the Baltic and Western Special Military Districts against East Prussia was reported to the High Commands of the Wehrmacht and the Army, although it was not recognized that the deployment of substantial forces stationed in Estonia (at least 2 corps corresponding to 6 divisions) and now belonging to the Leningrad Military District, including the 1st Mechanized Corps stationed in the Pskov-Luga-Porhov area with 902 tanks, the strongest in combat, was also planned in the direction of East Prussia. There was

a transfer of the leaderships of the 1st Rifle Corps of the Leningrad Military District to the Osovtsye area and of the 28th Rifle Corps of the Leningrad Military District to the Brest area, as well as of considerable parts of the 13th Army of the Moscow Military District (e.g.: the leadership of the 21st Rifle Corps of the Moscow Military District) to the Vitebsk area, i.e., in the direction of East Prussia. 100 These movements to concentrate Red Army units were noted as early as July 22, 1940, although their purpose was not fully realized. The message is recorded in Halder's war diary with the following wording: Quote III.47 "Russia: movement out of the Baltic provinces (withdrawal of operational troops?)." 101 In item 3.) information was given about a "considerable artillery reserve" of the Red Army, which was to consist of 8 artillery divisions of 4 artillery regiments each, as well as about other divisions of the Red Army. In case of war with Germany (point 5. of the information) it was expected that 66 rifle divisions, 20 cavalry divisions and 24 mot.mech. brigades (in total 98 calculation divisions) of the Red Army would remain and a high number of divisions against Finland (15 divisions) and Romania (30 divisions) as well as in the Far East (46 calculation divisions). 7 more divisions were to remain in the Caucasus. In point 6.) of the information

about "Russia" the dangerous development of the Russian air forces was made clear. The information spoke of 5,000 aircraft. Of these, 1,000 were said to be stationed in the Far East. The actual concentration of the number of air squadrons of the Red Army Air Forces in the western border military districts (Table 111.48) was confirmed by Stalin according to Tymoshenko's proposals on July 04, 1940. According to Tymoshenko's proposals of 04 July 1940, 42 air squadrons were still to remain in the Far East (Baikal Military District (15) and Far Eastern Front (27)). The heavy bombers were considered particularly dangerous, with a penetration depth of 1,500 km, but their numbers were unknown, in contrast to the mass of German bombers with a range of only 1,000 km. The immediately following conclusion (Quote III.49) proves the threat of this development to the German Reich recognized in the High Command. Quote III.49 "The armament industry of the German Reich incl. East Prussia and western Poland would only get out of the range of Russian bombers if their ports were pushed back behind the Arkhangelsk - Gorki Rostov line. " 103 In order to avert this threat and to be able to smash the armament industry of the USSR (especially in the Urals) (quote III.50), it was believed that because of the shorter range of German bombers of 1,000 km, it would be necessary to push the German "bomb ports" forward to the above mentioned line. Quote III.50 "From the present position, German bombers can reach all plants up to the line Ladoga Lake - Moscow Kharkov Sevastopol. For the capture of Gorky and the industrial area near and northwest of Rostov, an advance of about 300 km is required, i.e., as far as the Dünaburg Minsk line and the area south west of Kiev. The Ural district alone, under construction for only a few years, is not capable of meeting war requirements adequately. To attack it with bombers, the German bombing ports would have to be advanced to the line Arkhangelsk Gorki Rostov. " In the point 8.) of the information, in order to avert the threat, it was considered necessary to conduct strikes, on the Russian railroad system, which had been underestimated so far, so on the four railroad bridges of Gorky, Kazan, Ulyanovsk and Syran, as well as on the three mostly single-track north-south lines. 2

The Times of Recognition of the Danger in the East This information proves that as early as July 24, 1940, there were reports in the High Command of the Wehrmacht about the beginning of the Red Army's march. The campaigns against the Baltic States (immediate confrontation with East Prussia) and against Bessarabia (threat to the oil area around Ploesti) had already attracted attention, but had ended by that time. The deployment of 102 divisions of the Red Army in the border military districts, ordered on 06 July 1940, was to be completed by the end of August 1940. A report of the staff of the Western Special Military District 105 of the Red Army dated 27 July 1940 on the status of the implementation of the "concentration" (according to its own formulation 106) of troops proves that on 27 July 1940 this "concentration" was almost completed, that is, it must have been in progress since

the beginning of July 1940. The High Commands of the Wehrmacht and the Army thus had timely information about the Red Army's deployment, which had begun in early July 1940, and its advance near the border. The statement apparently used by von Brauchitsch in the OKH on July 22, 1940, but imputed to Hitler, "Take Russian problem in hand," is thus justified, among other things, by the campaigns waged against the Baltic states and Bessarabia and the beginning march of the Red Army, which does not exclude the possibility that Hitler could have learned of this threatening development earlier by other means. After all, the directives for the advance of the troops were issued by the People's Commissar for Defense of the USSR already on July 6, 1940, the approval/instruction for this was given by Stalin on July 4, 1940. This proves it: The Wehrmacht leadership was aware of the beginning of the threatening advance of the Red Army in July 1940 and the looming danger for East Prussia. This statement is also proven by the order given to Major General Mareks and Lieutenant Colonel von Lossberg to prepare studies on operational possibilities in the eastern direction, even though an attack by the Red Army was not initially expected. July 1940 Reconnaissance of the "First Time Window" for Stalin to open an offensive against Germany With Stalin's directive of 04 July 1940 (Timoshenko's directives of 06 July 1940), the deployment of 102 divisions as well as 95 air squadrons of the Red Army to the newly configured border military districts of the Soviet Union took place. The eastern border was virtually denuded during the Wehrmacht's western campaign and the security of the German Reich in the east was no longer assured, as Keitel (quote IH.51) and Jodi (quote in.52) testified during interrogations before the Nuremberg International Tribunal. Quote IIL51 "During the Western campaign there were ... seven divisions. Seven divisions from East Prussia to the Carpathians, of which even two were still transported to the West during the Western campaign, but were returned afterwards." 107 Through Jodi, this statement was confirmed as follows: Quote IIL52 "At first there were ten divisions, and these were reduced to six to five divisions in the course of the Western campaign:" 108 It was not until the Western campaign ended that security in the east was restored by 15 infantry divisions of the 18th Army, but these were in need of refreshment. An account of the forces of the Wehrmacht facing in the east at the end of July 1940 and of the Red Army formations reconnoitered after the Foreign Armies East reported them is shown in the following sketch III.53. As early as 24 July 1940 (Document III.43), the Foreign Armies East reported 198 computational divisions in total, 116 of which were in the western border military districts, and confirmed the Red Army's deployment. Stalin initially believed that the situation developing in the summer of 1940 was exceptionally favorable for an offensive and the opening of an eastern front against Germany, since the Wehrmacht was largely fragmented. However, Stalin was unable to take advantage of this window of opportunity he had hoped for because: O the Wehrmacht's victory in France had been achieved unexpectedly quickly, and the surrender of France on June 22, 1940, would have allowed the Wehrmacht's battle-hardened if worn-out formations to be moved to the east quite quickly; O the landing of the Wehrmacht planned for the summer of 1940 (15. O the Red Army was not yet equipped for a confrontation with the Wehrmacht in this possible strength, and O the three-power pact concluded between Germany, Italy, and Japan on September 27, 1940, could have meant the two- or multi-tone war Stalin feared.¹¹¹ Nevertheless, by instructions of 04 July and Tymoshenko's directives of 06 July 1940, he ordered the deployment of 102 divisions and 95 air squadrons to the border military districts of the Soviet Union. As evidenced by the above documents and shown above (Sketch IH.53), this dangerously developing situation in the East had been elucidated and had become known to the political and military leadership even before Hitler's statement of intent on July 31, 1940. On July 26, 1940, i.e., four days later, Kinzel then gave a lecture on the bases concerning the enemy side for a contemplated operation against Russia. Quote III.54 "Kinzel (Oqu IV): Lecture on the bases on the enemy side for an operation against Russia. From this it follows that the most favorable operation

possibility with leaning on the Baltic Sea takes direction Moscow and then forces the Russian group of forces in the Ukraine and on the Black Sea from the north to fight with reversed front. " 112 The brevity of the time of drafting this memo of conversation, 4 days, proves that these findings about the deployment of the Red Army by the Abteilung Fremde Heere Ost could not have been procured only after Halder's demand, but were already available, i.e., must have been known at least in the Army High Command. None of the sources known so far allows the assumption that Hitler had issued instructions in this regard. For Halder, who took part in the forthcoming consultation at the Berghof on 31 July 1940, this lecture note (Document III.43) undoubtedly formed the basis of all deliberations on the "enemy side." Also, Colonel von Greiffenberg's instruction of 23 July 1940 to summon Major General Mareks, Chief of Staff of the 18th Army, to the OKH to prepare a study was undoubtedly made by Halder already as a result of the evaluation of the meeting with Hitler of 21 July 1940. 28 July 1940 Denkschrift der Seekriegsleitung "Betrachtungen über Rußland" The Denkschrift of the Seekriegsleitung, commissioned by Raeder, of 28 July 1940 was obviously also produced as a result of these presentations by Hitler of 21 July 1940, in order to "make mental preparations (for the Verf.) as requested." Although in this memorandum, which was characterized more by considerations of economic policy, "the military forces of the Russian Wehrmacht.... were described as far inferior to our war-experienced troops," the draftsman of the memorandum nevertheless suggested using one's own political strength "to attempt to achieve the intended objective through negotiations. " However, the following sentence, "Germany's security in the European area is based on military superiority over any adversary and combination of adversaries," should be cause for reflection. Why does the memorandum mention a "combination of opponents" at a time when France was defeated, by which can only be meant an expected alliance of England with the Soviet Union? Since it speaks of "military superiority over ... a combination of adversaries" was spoken of, the United States could not be meant from the standpoint of a British-American naval war against Germany. July 29, 1940 Presentations of the Chief of the Wehrmacht Guidance Staff, General Jodi, to the Chief of Department, Colonel Warlimont, and Other Leaders Before the Nuremberg International Tribunal, Jodi replied to the question of his defense counsel, Prof. Dr. Exner, as to when he (Jodi) first heard of Hitler's concern that Russia might turn hostile to Germany: Quote IIL55 "For the first time on July 29, 1940, at the Berghof near Berchtesgaden. " 113 On that day, Jodi, Chief of the Wehrmacht Joint Staff, opened up to his division chief, Colonel Warlimont, and to the heads of the Army Operational Groups, Lieutenant Colonel von Lossberg, Navy, Corvette Captain Junge, and Air Force, Major Baron von Falkenstein, in the strictest secrecy, Hitler's eventual intention "to wrestle down Soviet Russia with arms. " 14 According to Helmut Greiner, leader of the War Diary of the Supreme Wehrmacht Command from 1939-1943, i.e., one of the best-informed people, General Jodi submitted that the campaign would be waged against the Soviet Union "because one could expect to make Great Britain more peace-minded by defeating Russia. "115 The campaign to "defeatRussia "was thus initially conceived out of a consideration of continuing the fight against Britain by crushing its last "mainland enemy." The connection with the British hopes reported to the leadership of the Third Reich from Paris and London that the Soviet Union would complete the encirclement alongside the Allies, open the fourth front against Germany, the Eastern Front, and thus save England, is more than obvious. The letter from Goering and von Ribbentrop to Field Marshal Mannerheim of 02 April 1940 (Document 11.36) can be taken as proof. On the other hand, Greiner writes, Hitler was convinced "... that Stalin still attached great importance to close cooperation with the Reich and that for the time being there was no danger from Soviet Russia in this year" but "... that the Soviet Union, too, would adhere to the non-aggression pact only as long as it seemed advantageous to it. And about the broad power-political aims of the Soviets, especially after the

recent events in the Baltic area and in the Balkans, he did not indulge in any deception. "116 29 July 1940 Briefing of Major General Mareks by Halder According to his note in the War Diary of 22 July 1940 „e) * Operation: what operational objectives can we provide? What forces? Time and space of deployment? ..." (Quote III.40), Halder instructed the Chief of Staff of the 18th Army stationed in the east, Major General Mareks, who had already received instructions to report to the Army General Staff on 23 July 1940, to clarify these questions on 29 July 1940. Mareks

had thus received this assignment even before Hitler's statement of intent of 31 July 1940. Regarding this assignment to Major General Mareks, Halder informed the editor of the War Diary on 10 December 1962 as follows: Quote III.56 "Hitler had already expressed his thoughts about a war of aggression against Russia to the ObdH from about the middle of July 1940. On 21.7. a meeting took place between the two in which for the first time the aims and force requirements of an offensive against the Soviet Union were discussed. Since I did not want to promote this idea, which I had firmly rejected, on the part of the General Staff, but on the other hand had to reckon with the fact that Hitler would suddenly bring this idea, which up to then had not been considered at all in the OKH, to the fore, I summoned the Chief of Genst. of the 18th Army, Gen. Mareks, to the OKH and gave him the task of clarifying the intellectual basis for an attack operation in the east on his own, without calling on other parts of the General Staff. He reported to me on 29.7.1940, started work immediately and reported to me on 1.8., 5.8. and 6.8. on the development of his thoughts. The same assignment was given to Colonel i. G. Feyerabend, who had been transferred to the Op.Abt. independently of Mareks. Thus, for the meeting with Hitler on 31.7.1940, the OKH had already made some considerations in the operational field, but not in the field of the Quartermaster General. " 117 Halder thus confirms, even 22 years after his assignment to Mareks, that Hitler had only expressed thoughts on July 21, 1940, and that the assignment to Mareks to work out intellectual foundations for the East arose from his own initiative. Since Major General Mareks did not present the first results of his investigations until 01 August 1940, Halder's formulation "... already made some considerations in the operational field,.... ", Halder could only have meant Kinzel's memo about the "enemy side" of July 24, 1940, which had been available to him since July 26, 1940, as well as possibly his own considerations. The author interprets this as an indication that Halder must also have presented findings from this memo to Hitler. Hitler must have been aware of the political developments in the East (land seizure of the Baltic countries, Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina by the USSR, Cripps with Stalin etc.).), which he undoubtedly knew in detail, would also have been fully informed by Halder about the beginning deployment of the Red Army in the border military districts of the Soviet Union, when he made his "certain decision", as he called his expression of intent, on July 31, 1940, during his meeting at the Berghof. A close examination of the chronological sequence of events and a comparison of Hitler's statements in the sources and Halder's notes concerning his own actions must lead to the conclusion that Halder began his investigations and commissioned the preparation of studies even before Hitler's deliberations of July 31, 1940, which the author refers to as his "expression of intent." Halder's explanations to von Greiffenberg (citation IIJL33) at the consultation with subordinates on 03 July 1940 can be taken as proof. As Halder himself confirmed in 1962 (citation III.56), it was only a matter of laying the mental foundations for an offensive operation in the east. July 30, 1940 Consultation of the Commander-in-Chief of the Army in the General Staff with Halder As a result of this consultation, the main content of which was the fight against England, Halder recorded the following consideration: Quote HI37 „c) If one does not believe to be able to succeed against England on its island this fall, then remains 1. the attack against Gibraltar (by land via Spain). 2. support of the Italian in North Africa by armored units (Egypt). 3. attack against the English in Haifa. 4. attack against the Suez Canal. 5. rush Russia to Persian Gulf. " 118 The thoughts expressed in the following quote 111.58 in this conversation are revealing. Quote HL58 "d. The

question whether, if a decision cannot be forced against England and there is a danger that England will align herself with Russia, the two-front war which then arises should first be waged against Russia, is to be answered to the effect that it is better to keep friendly with Russia. " These considerations prove that Brauchitsch, in the spirit of Hitler's remark and in implementation of his own statement of July 22, 1940, "Tackle Russian problem. Make mental preparations. " had recognized a threatening developing situation in the East, which could develop from the alliance with England, but still believed that he could circumvent a military confrontation with the Soviet Union by "rushing Rußlandauflßtn the author) Persian Gulf ". In fact, therefore, at that time (July 30, 1940) there had not yet been an exact order from Hitler that the General Staff could have taken as an order to prepare for an attack on the Soviet Union. Hitler's alleged "decision" for a "war of conquest" against the Soviet Union of July 31, 1940, however, was only a statement of intent July 31, 1940Grand Meeting of Hitler at the Berghof On July 31, 1940, Hitler held a meeting with Grand Adm. July 1940, Hitler held a meeting with Grand Admiral Raeder on the Obersalzberg about the planned landing (Operation "Sea Lion") in England, which was also attended by Generals Keitel, Jodi, von Brauchitsch, Halder and Rudolf Schmundt, in which Hitler announced the start of the planned air attacks on England. After Raeder's departure, he consulted with the generals about the possible need for war against Russia. Some generally known quotations from this discussion from Halder's notes are reproduced here: Quote IIL59 "Assuming England does not enter: Elimination of hopes that can move England to still hope for change: War in itself won. France falls away for British escort; submarine warfare and air warfare may decide war, but will take 1-2 years. England hope on Russia and America. If hope on Russia falls away, America falls away too, because omission of Russia would result in an upgrading of Japan in East Asia

to a tremendous extent. Russia decisive sword of England and America against Japan. Unpleasant wind here for England. Japanese have their program, like Russia, to be finished before the end of the war. Russia factor on which England most relies. Something happened in London! The English were already all down, now they are up again. Intercepted conversations. Russia unpleasantly touched by rapid development of West European situation. Decision: In the course of this confrontation, Russia must be dealt with. Spring 1941: The sooner we crush Russia, the better. The operation makes sense only if we crush the state in one fell swoop. A certain gain of space alone is not enough. Standing still in winter precarious. Therefore, it is better to wait, but make a firm decision to finish off Russia. Necessary also because of the position on the Baltic Sea. 2nd Groji state (Russia) not useful on Baltic Sea. (Start of campaign:) May 1941. 5 months time for execution. Preferably this year. Can't, however, to carry out operation uniformly. Goal: Destruction of Russia's vitality...." 121 In the following, according to Halder's war diary, some political objectives and strategic thrusts of the campaign as well as operational force calculations were presented. 01 August 1940 The Understanding of Hitler's Statement of Intent of 31 July 1940 in the High Commands of the Wehrmacht and the Army On 01 August 1940, the evaluation of the meeting with Hitler was made by the Chief of the Wehrmacht Leadership Office. From his remarks on Hitler's determinations of 31 July 1940 the orders resulting in the following quotation III.60 were mentioned: Quote III.60 "From the communications of the Chief WFA the following orders result: 1. The decisions of the Fuehrer will be summarized in an OKW order of 1.8. 2. directive No. 17 for the intensified naval and air war against England. 3. compilation of disputed points in the views of the Army and Navy on the "Sea Lion" enterprise. 4. order of misleading measures in connection with the "Sea Lion" enterprise on this proposal of the OKH. 5. guidelines for propaganda in connection with the "Sea Lion" enterprise. 6. compilation of measures for the conduct of the war against England in the winter half-year, if the "Sea Lion" enterprise should no longer be carried out this year: For this purpose, the following are possible: a) according to proposals of Dept. I and the Ob.d.H., the detachment of armored units to support the Italian action against Egypt, the support of Italy by the

Luftwaffe in the seizure of Gibraltar and in undertakings against Alexandria; b) measures in Syria and against the Arab countries; c) recourse to Japanese support for the naval war. 7. *tambefehl für den Aufbau Ost*. 8. collection of documents for a draft order for preparations of longer duration (concerning preparations for a campaign against the Soviet Union). Significantly, in points 1 to 6, the High Command of the Wehrmacht gave absolute priority to measures for the further struggle against England, without referring to Hitler's alleged "decision" to finish off Russia (citation IIL59) or organizing its implementation. Only in pt. 8 was the minute-taker able to record the following order: "8. Collection of documents for a draft order of longer duration (betr. Preparations for a campaign against the Soviet Union)." According to a note by the editor of the war diary, however, the remark in parentheses ("...campaign against the Soviet Union") is supposed to be a handwritten entry, and it is not known when it was added. 123 On 01 August 1940, Halder also gave his staff in the Army General Staff (Müller, Greiffenberg, Buhle, Wagner, Heusinger) the appropriate tasks arising from the meeting of 31 July 1940 concerning the „b) Russische) question" (as he himself put it). On December 10, 1962, he informed the editor of the KTB in this regard: Quote III.61 "The assignment to them was, first of all, in the most diverse areas of the Genst. Service to examine mentally which questions for the command tasks of the OKH are raised by the new political decision formation." 124 Halder, however, also gave a more far-reaching tasking in *Ostaufgaben*, for example, on the organizational requirements for the formation of 40 divisions and on armament bases for a future army. He also heard initial thoughts on Major General Marek's study. 125 Summary of Hitler's Consultation of 31 July 1940 and its Evaluation in the High Commands of 01 August 1940 1. The main content of the consultation of 31 July 1940 was the "Sea Lion" enterprise ordered on 16 July 1940 by Directive No. 16, as also evidenced by the further orders in the High Commands of the Wehrmacht (citation III.60) and the Army. From Hitler's statements it can be inferred that he assumed that Russia and America were England's last hope. As many events of the summer of 1940 prove, and given the perceived danger of a dangerous development in the East for the planned landing in England, this concern was not unfounded. There was no question that, in the event of the implementation of "Sea Lion," Stalin would have had the opportunity to act as "England's mainland dagger" and open an offensive against Germany, given the balance of power in the East that had already been recognized in the run-up to July 31, 1940 (cf. above.). It is remarkable that in this initial stage of all considerations about a campaign against Russia Hitler did not mention habitat issues in the East or the confrontation with "Bolshevism" allegedly planned by him with a single word. 2. did Hitler really make a "decision" 7 "certain decision" to conduct a campaign against the USSR on July 31, 1940? In general, established historiography regards it as historically proven that Hitler's statement of July 31, 1940, "Entschluß: Im Zuge dieser Auseinandersetzung muß Rußland erledigt werden." marked the decision for the Russian campaign. 126 General Warlimont also sees it this way, writing after citing a few quotations, "Even from these few excerpts it is clear with unambiguous clarity that Hitler's will to proceed against Russia meant from the outset an unconditional, according to his own frequently used expression, an "unalterable" decision." 127 He must have been mistaken, because the expression "unalterable" was not used in this context. Also the "... few excerpt(s)..." previously cited by him in his work do not allow for such an assessment. Also the statements of the Chief of the Wehrmacht Leadership Office (quote IIL60) of August 1, 1940 and his orders resulting from Hitler's consultation as well as the entire further historical course of events documented by documents prove that the "decision:..." or "..." expressed by Hitler on July 31, 1940, was not a "decision...".... certain resolution to finish off Russia. " was neither a "certain" nor, as Warlimont writes, an "unalterable resolution." Although Hitler, as Supreme Commander of the Wehrmacht, exercised his concrete command by means of directives, there were at that time no written determinations whatsoever concerning the preparation of a campaign against the Soviet Union. The first such determination was

Instruction No. 21 of December 18, 1940, which was subject to the restrictive condition of being prepared for a campaign against the Soviet Union, but not to carry it out. Only the first stage of a phased escalation had been achieved. Details will be considered later in this investigation. Evidence that this pronouncement was not "unalterable" will be cited here: O the occurrence of a gap in Hitler's employment with this attack of almost 6 months until 05 December 1940, the day of the presentation of the Commander-in-Chief of the Army and the Chief of the General Staff to Hitler on the planning to Barbarossa. Schramm writes: "..., this is another proof of how indecisive Hitler had been in the summer and autumn of 1940, and that there could be no question of a final decision to attack Russia. Since the OKH did not want to take any initiative on its own, it waited until Hitler ordered to speak."1281 O by his readiness to form a continental bloc involving Russia after an initiative by Ribbentrop, Hitler's proves his still unclear will at this time; O his attempt, at a meeting with Molotov on 12/13. November 1940, to stop the recognized dangerous development in the East; O also purely formal questions indicate, so the mention of the planned attack in Hitler's directive No. 18 of November 12, 1940, only in point 5, the formulation in the directive No. 21 Case Barbarossa of Dec. 18, 1940, in which it was stated, "The Wehrmacht must be prepared for it,...", and so on, that other tasks were probably still given priority at that time. O And even Halder stated in a letter to A. Hillgruber of October 5, 1954: "The meeting of July 31 did not seem to us to express a final decision, but only a starting shot for the preparations to be made in advance. We had already experienced similar cases several times."129 In this respect, what Hitler said on July 31, 1940, can only be interpreted as an expression of intent, especially since even Warlimont attributes to Hitler a "predilection for exaggeration in expression."130 3.

Nevertheless, it is apparent

that Hitler's realization that he might have to attack the Soviet Union was expressed more clearly. It is therefore worth considering which events may have led to this formation of Hitler's opinion. The decisive basis of all Hitler's considerations was Stalin's policy, which found its expression in the westward expansion of lands by 250–300 km, the westward concentration of his armed forces on a significant scale and a thereby increasing air threat, in the establishment of connections with Great Britain (Cripps), the creation of trouble spots in Scandinavia, the eastern Baltic Sea and in the Balkans. Hitler's formulation "Russia is the decisive sword of England" proves his distrust of Stalin and his expected actions, which was proved by the above mentioned events. Had he been able to build on a trusting partnership with the Soviet Union, such an assumption that Russia could become England's continental sword would never have been necessary. Decisive reconnaissance results were, after all, available: The reports of German diplomats from London and Paris in the spring/summer of 1939 about the planned encirclement of Germany and the opening of an eastern front by Stalin, which England had hoped for; the discoveries of files from La Charite mentioned by Hitler in his speech on July 19, 1940; the reconnaissance information about the Red Army's deployment of July 24. July 1940, confirmed by the information of the Estonian General Staff (as of mid-July 1940), intercepted conversations and intercepted dispatches from ambassadors accredited in Moscow to their governments, according to Hitler's own formulation of 31. July 1940, the increasing attacks by the Soviet Union against Finland according to a report by Köstring of July 11, 1940, which suggested further aggression against Finland, the imminent unlawful incorporation of the occupied Baltic countries as Union republics into the Soviet Union according to Halder's and the naval command's findings of July 5, 1940, the unrest in the Baltic states, and the fact that the Soviet Union was not yet in a position to take over the Soviet Union. July 1940, Stalin's unrestful actions in the Balkans, such as the illegal occupation of Northern Bukovina (June 28, 1940), the incipient cooperation of the Soviet Union with Yugoslavia, and many others. In this respect, we must assume a whole bundle of motives that led to Hitler's declaration of intent on July 31, 1940, the military-political core of which was the enlightened threatening deployment of the Red Army

formations and the increasing air threat to Germany. 4 The Share of the Generals In Halder's war diary it is recorded about this consultation on p. 50, note (15): "The ObdH and Gen. Col. Halder confined themselves to taking note of Hitler's intention. Halder wanted to avoid discussion of it as long as possible, partly in order to delay the decision on the launching of the campaign. " T31 It can be inferred from the attribution of this note, however, that this reticence referred only to the operational thrust directions, not to the overall plan, for it was Halder, after all, who, on the basis of Kinzel's Vbrtragsnotiz of 24 July 1940 (Document III.43), which he himself had commissioned, provided the decisive military basis for all considerations on the enemy side. It cannot be refuted that this reconnaissance information of the Foreign Armies East of July 24, 1940, formed one of the bases of Hitler's preliminary decision, taken on July 31, 1940, to make mental preparations for a campaign against the USSR. For by July 31, 1940, at the latest, Hitler should have learned about the growing concentration of Russian troops in the border area, which does not exclude the possibility that he could have learned about this concentration from other sources much earlier. It was therefore the generals of the Army High Command (Halder), possibly also of the Wehrmacht (Jodi), who, on the basis of the available reconnaissance results, noticed a dangerous development in the eastern direction that had become apparent as a result of the actions of the Red Army and came to the conclusion that they might have to counter it preventively. That they did not have the authority to decide on preventive actions is known to everyone. Nevertheless, Halder's modest measures taken as early as 1940 to restore security in the East (18th Army) and to increase it (formation

of Army Group B) with the order to be ready for preventive action if required by a Red Army attack are sufficiently documented by the Wehrmacht documents (documents IIL27/28/29). 111.5

Establishing the Further Growth of the Danger from the East; Strengthening Eastern Security by Forming Army Group B Still in the period of the transfer of the units for the restoration of the security of the Reich in the direction of the East (transfer of the 18th Army), a series of events occurred, all inspired by the Soviet Union, which required that the greatest attention be given to developments in the East. Although the Soviet Union had expressly stated at the conclusion of the Treaty of Frontiers and Friendship at the end of September 1939 that it had no intention of occupying or annexing the states within its sphere of interest, this assurance was not kept. 119 The remark recorded in note 15 by the editor of the War Diary also emphasizes that Generalfeldmarschall von Brauchitsch and Generaloberst Halder did not rule out a coming together of England and Russia that would force the waging of a two-front war. However, only then should an offensive against the Soviet Union be planned. 119 120